Dear Friends,

God continues to transform lives here at Portland Fellowship! If you're anything like me, current events in our country and world can bring up feelings of hopelessness and despair, and it can be tempting to wonder, "Is anyone staying faithful to God and obediently following His ways?" Thankfully, the Lord continues to manifest His grace to us here at Portland Fellowship and confirm that yes, He *is* still at work in people's minds and hearts, and yes, there *are* still people willing to surrender all to Jesus.

At the 2019 Taking Back Ground retreat last month, PF participants, leaders, staff and volunteers set aside a weekend to get away from the cares of the world and draw near to Jesus. The TBG retreats are always a mixture of excitement, anticipation, joy and a little bit of anxiety thrown in for good measure. While it is fun to step outside our normal program routine and have extra time to fellowship, the retreat is really an intentional time to connect with God and get closer to Him. We do this through worship, extended time reading the Word, and praying for one another, but one of the most powerful ways we connect with Jesus at the TBG retreat is through the Surrender Service.

Leading up to the retreat, we encourage participants to pray and consider surrendering something that is hindering their walk with the Lord—this could be a sinful habit, a false belief or lie about God or one's self, or even something good that has taken our time, attention and affection away from the Lord. Instead of *committing* to doing something for God (essentially promising we'll do something for Him in our own strength), we challenge everyone to consider *surrendering* to Jesus—laying down our rights; giving up; admitting defeat; relinquishing control over something (or someone) to Him. This year, the participants were also asked to imagine what their lives could look like without the idols or hindrances that they've been carrying. In preparation for the Surrender Service, one participant shared, "I've always struggled with my fantasy life. I never thought about what it would be like to *not* have fantasy in my life. I'm not sure how it's possible, but I think I want to surrender my fantasy life to Jesus."

During this year's Surrender Service, the Lord showed up in a powerful way. Participants laid down their rights to sinful relationships, gave up objects that had ties to old memories and vices, and renounced false beliefs that contradicted God's truth in their lives. One particularly moving moment during the evening was when one of the Year One participants, Charlie, surrendered his self-hatred. Charlie had written on a mirror all of the lies he believed about himself, and laid that down at the foot of the cross, choosing to believe, by faith, the truth about who God says he is.

A few days after the retreat, we received an email from Charlie:

update april 2019



"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners."

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This is a night I will never forget. This very special night, I surrendered the lies and false identities I constantly saw when looking at the looking glass. I finally was able to surrender this idol of self-condemnation, and this small surrender has made a huge impact. After the ceremony, Jason asked me to punch the mirror, and seeing the shards of glass shatter in every direction holds a symbol of freedom to me. I needed to fall apart to be put back together the correct way. Those shards of glass represent the death of the old Charlie, and I have been born again as one of God's adopted sons. In love, God has predestined me for adoption and now I am His...I am reminded of Galatians 1:7—"In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." [That night] did so much more than make me a new being in Christ. I heard and believed the Truth that night, and at that moment I was sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit. I want to scream on the mountain tops that "The Holy Spirit dwells within me!" I have never felt as close and as connected to Him. I can feel His love.

Seeing the obedience of Charlie and the other TBG participants to surrender their idols and their whole hearts to the lordship of Christ is like witnessing a miracle. We know that Jesus promises us that when we lose our lives for His sake, we will find them (*Matt. 10:39*), and that "...*if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation; the old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17).* Yet, how many of us actually have the privilege of witnessing Jesus transforming someone first-hand? We can't help but step back in awe and praise God for how He continues to call people to repentance in His kindness, and bring new life to those who are willing to die to themselves for His sake. Thank you for partnering with us in prayer, financial support, encouragement and sharing how Jesus continues to transform people who surrender everything to Him.

In Christ,

Patrick Silvis Program Coordinator

## Marriage Conference: Marriage Redeemed

Tuff Stuff Ministries is hosting a married couples conference entitled "Marriage Redeemed—Learning a 'New Dance'", April 13th in Lake Oswego. There is hope and healing available for couples dealing with infidelity, and this conference will be an encouragement for those seeking to restore their marriage. For more information, call 503-310-2754 or email dmiller@icmusa.org.



## **RHN Conference: HOPE 2019**



This year's Restored Hope Network conference, HOPE 2019, will take place on June 21-22 in Minneapolis, MN. Keynote speakers include June Hunt, Alex McFarland, Juli Slattery and Phil Courson. There will also be breakout sessions, worship and fellowship. For more information and registration, visit www.restoredhopenetwork.org.

**Portland Fellowship** is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

## events calendar

## tuesdays in april Taking Back Ground Wives Group

Discipleship programs for men and women struggling with SSA; wives of husbands who struggle. 7-9:30 pm at the PF house.

> thursdays in april Upper Room Community Intensive discipleship program.

> > april 12 Hope Group For Family and Friends. Dinner will be provided. 6:30 pm at the PF house.

april 16-17 Jason Speaking Jason will be sharing with Portland Bible College's Advanced Counseling class.

**Speakers, counseling, youth support and personal support** can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com